

Remarks

Upon entry of the foregoing amendment, claims 1, 2, 4, 5, 8, 11, 12, and 16 are pending in the application, with 1, 8, 11, and 16 being the independent claims. Claims 3, 6, 7, 9, 10, and 13-15 are sought to be cancelled without prejudice to or disclaimer of the subject matter therein. New claim 16 is sought to be added. These changes introduce no new matter, and their entry is respectfully requested.

Based on the following remarks, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider all outstanding objections and rejections and that they be withdrawn.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §103

The Examiner has rejected claims 1, 2, 6-8, 11, 12, 14, and 15 of the present invention. The Examiner has objected to claims 3-5, 9, 10, and 13.

Claim 1 has been amended to include the features of claim 3, as per the Examiner's comment that inclusion of those features with those of the independent base claim 1 would yield an allowable claim. The dependency of claim 4 has been changed accordingly. Because amended claim 1 is now allowable, dependent claims 4 and 5 are likewise allowable.

Claim 8 has been amended to include the features of claim 9, as per the Examiner's comment that inclusion of those features with those of the independent base claim 8 would yield an allowable claim.

Claim 11 has been amended to include the features of claim 13, as per the Examiner's comment that inclusion of those features with those of the independent base

claim 11 would yield an allowable claim. Because claim 11 is now allowable, dependent claim 12 is likewise allowable.

Claim 16 has been added, which combines the features of independent claim 8 with the features of dependent claim 10, as per the Examiner's comment that rewriting claim 8 to include the features of claim 10 would yield an allowable claim.

Claims 3, 6, 7, 9, 10, and 13-15 are sought to be cancelled.

Conclusion

All of the stated grounds of objection and rejection have been properly traversed, accommodated, or rendered moot. Applicants therefore respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider all presently outstanding objections and rejections and that they be withdrawn. Applicants believe that a full and complete reply has been made to the outstanding Office Action and, as such, the present application is in condition for allowance. If the Examiner believes, for any reason, that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the number provided.

Prompt and favorable consideration of this Amendment and Reply is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

STERNE, KESSLER, GOLDSTEIN & FOX P.L.L.C.



Edward W. Yee
Attorney for Applicants
Registration No. 47,294

Date: November 3, 2003

1100 New York Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20005-3934
(202) 371-2600